

## **Friends of Worcester meeting minutes      Meeting date: November 12, 2008**

**Review of Minutes.** The minutes of the October meeting were approved and will be posted on the website.

**Treasurer's Report.** Barbara McMonagle reported on the budget to date.

**President's Report.** Kim David represented FOW at the recent Montgomery County Lands Trust Green Futures Achievement Awards dinner. He reported that the preservation of Frank D'Lauro's property was featured in a recent announcement by Natural Lands Trust.

Kim reported that our efforts to hand out informational material about FOW at the polls this month were fairly successful, although some polls still need more volunteers. He explained that the poll leader is to set up the table at the beginning of the day, coordinate volunteers to hand out material during the day, help out with staffing as needed, and take down the table when the polls close. It was suggested that we need more professional looking signage for our tables. Jen Strouse volunteers to look into this.

At our January meeting, we will set goals for 2009. Kim asked everyone to think about appropriate goals for 2009 and bring ideas to the January meeting.

Meadowood's director has invited FOW to hold additional meetings at their location. Kim suggested holding our February meeting there. He will contact Meadowood to arrange this.

### **Current Issues:**

**Turnpike Expansion Project:** Susan Caughlan met with the township engineer to learn more about the requirements for stormwater basins, and then attended a meeting with turnpike residents and John Harris at which these requirements were discussed. The goal is to minimize the intrusion of the basins on the wooded areas along Bethel Road. Follow-up meetings with DEP are planned. Senator John Rafferty is working with turnpike officials to extend the noise barriers along the turnpike throughout Worcester. It was decided that these efforts are addressing the residents' needs, and that FOW does not need to write a letter to the turnpike officials at this point.

**School District Facilities Report.** Rob Hayes reported that the contractor made a presentation on the report at the recent school board meeting. The total estimated cost for all improvements recommended in the report is \$25 million. At the same time, the district is seeing lower revenues due to reassessment appeals and lower earned income taxes. At our spring meetings, we will discuss how to explain to residents that the recommendations regarding the high school sports stadium will result in the "urbanization" of Worcester, something that residents have repeatedly said they oppose.

### **New Business.**

**Sustainable Agriculture:** Doug Rotondo explained that as stated in the fall newsletter, farmland that is near urban and suburban development is in particular danger of being lost, even though this farmland is the most likely to sustain these urban and suburban areas as food safety and availability become more critical issues. This could be a theme for a future newsletter -- "What can you do with farmland once it's preserved?" Ideas like community-supported agriculture and Willow Creek Orchard's buying club were discussed. Doug suggested that the newer developments that have community open space could be encouraged to lease this space to a farmer instead of keeping it in grass that must be mowed, watered, and fertilized at the HOA's expense.

**Newsletter Committee.** Kim David congratulated everyone on a great newsletter and thanked the volunteers who helped with the labels on Saturday. Susan Caughlan thanked the committee for their excellent editorial work. Kim asked the committee to report at the January meeting on ideas for the spring newsletter theme.

**Land Preservation Committee.** Susan Caughlan reported that she and Barb McMonagle met to discuss the committee's evaluation criteria for identifying preservation projects, and also to discuss some initial projects. Several people mentioned additional properties that could be possible projects. Susan asked them to see whether these landowners would like to meet with a committee member to discuss the possibility of preserving their property.

**Advisory council Development Committee.** The committee has not yet met, so there was no report.

**Website.** Dave Cardy was asked whether we can track hits on the website to see how much activity we are getting. We discussed how to attract more website users. Jen Strouse suggested that we market the website by sending out periodic email notices that direct people to the website, such as an announcement when the newsletter is published, or when FOW has news about an ongoing project.

**Outreach Committee.** Jen Strouse reported on the committee's idea to prepare welcome baskets for new residents of the township. Susan will follow up on earlier suggestions that Meadowood's Greeters' Committee could prepare (and deliver?) the baskets if we provide them with the contact information.

Susan presented information on a grant available from Fiskars Corp. for community garden projects. The committee was asked to review the application to see whether it would fit with a spring activity with Worcester Elementary School. Susan will help with preparation of the application if needed.

### **Township Reports.**

**Board of Supervisors.** A representative of the David Cutler Corp, which is building one section of the age-qualified townhouses on North Wales Rd, asked the board to change the township ordinance requiring that the community be age-restricted, because the company is having trouble marketing the homes. Many residents spoke against this proposal for various reasons, including the detrimental effect on school taxes if the age restriction is lifted. The board did not take any action. FOW will send a letter to the board expressing our position.

The board voted to join a coalition of municipalities that border the Skippack Creek, in response to proposed DEP regulations on total maximum daily load (TMDL) for several pollutants. The limits, which are already in place on sewage treatment plant outfalls, are proposed to become more restrictive and eventually to include stormwater outfalls. The coalition will conduct joint water sampling, but will also oppose stricter regulations when they are announced. A resident suggested that instead of spending township money to oppose the regulations, the township should work with the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy to determine the best way to address pollutants from stormwater outfalls. This will benefit the township, by reducing the cost of dealing with the pollutants, as well as residents, by providing cleaner drinking water.

The board reported that the newly formed Park & Recreation Advisory Committee will be publishing a short survey in the winter township newsletter to ask residents about the recreational they would like to see in the township. Susan asked everyone to take a minute to return the survey in the mail or on line.

**Planning Commission.** The Planning Commission toured several villages in the area.

**Zoning Hearing Board.** There was no report.

**Joint Meeting.** The next Joint Meeting of the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission is scheduled for Monday, December 1, at 9:30 a.m. in Community Hall, Fairview Village.

**Contributors/Supporters.** Barb McMonagle reported that contributions are running on average close to the budget projections. We discussed whether to mail the 2009 contribution letter to all township residents or just our contributors' list of about 350 names. It was decided to mail to all township residents.

Kim David asked the group to consider whether FOW should start a partnership program with vendors, either rebating 10% of a contributor's purchase to FOW or giving the contributor a discount when shopping at the vendor's location. The Fundraising and Contributions Committees will discuss this and report back.

**Fundraising/Hospitality.** Marie and Donn were thanked for their recent work on the newsletter ads.

**Administrative Assistant's Report.** Susan presented a quote from Nina Cucé for reprinting the brochure. It was decided to change two photographs before proceeding. Al Cucé volunteered his daughter Gina to take one of the photos; Susan will supply the other one. 1000 brochures will be printed.

**FOW 2009 meetings:** Wednesdays: January 14, February 11, and March 11. Meetings are held at Bean Road Nursery) beginning at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted on the website.

**Holiday Potluck:** Monday, December 29, 6:30 to 10 p.m. at the home of Rob and Wini Hayes. RSVP to 610-584-0371 or info@friendsofworcester.org

Respectfully submitted, Susan Caughlan